

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 15- The Affections of the Heart

133. The Assurance of Salvation- Part 2

WAOY Friday/Monday 01/11-14/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what the Apostle John taught about, "The Assurance of Salvation". So, let's read **1John 3: 19-24** again together:

19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Now many people today seem to struggle with doubting their Salvation- while others seem to go through life greatly assured. And John is teaching here that many who are very assured of their Salvation should not be so confident- while some who struggle should not struggle. So what exactly is the assurance of our Salvation and how can a person know for sure if he has been truly born again? Those are the issues that we will deal with during our examination of these six verses in **1John**.

Now the assurance that we have about our Salvation is tied to what we understand to be true about Salvation. And that is good- unless we do not understand Salvation properly. Because if we do not understand Salvation in a Biblical way; if our comprehension of

Salvation came from Man and not God- then our assurance will be warped and it will be warped in one of two ways.

Either we will become self- righteous like the Pharisees who trusted in themselves for their righteousness- or we will descend into total despair- realizing that even though we have repented and trusted in the finished Work of Jesus Christ- we are in fact still sinful.

And those who ascribe to the first error and use Salvation as a means to become self- righteous- will rarely admit that they actually sin against God or that their sin actually matters to God. Because these people are impressed with their own righteousness- they do not truly believe that even when they sin- that it is so bad that God would hold it against them. And this is exactly the trap that the Pharisees fell into. So the assurance and confidence that these people have is a false one and one that is based upon their own level of achievement and success and their own will power and has nothing to do with Biblical Assurance.

And what is amazing about the logic of these people is that the people who espouse this error will admit that *you* can lose *your* Salvation if *you* sin- but they will hardly if ever admit that *their* Salvation is negatively affected when *they* sin. These people are deceived into thinking that because they try; that because their motive is pure; that because they have a “good” heart or because they love Jesus- that when they sin- it really doesn’t count or it isn’t held against them.

So these people don’t really trust in the Merits of Christ alone. And this error has the effect of giving these people a false sense of security based upon what *they* do and based upon the condition of *their* own heart- which Jesus said is the single most unreliable and wicked commodity that we possess.

Now as bad as the first error is- the second error is just as bad. Because of a faulty understanding of Salvation- this second group go into complete despair over the fact that they aren’t sinlessly perfect. And this incorrect way of looking at Salvation teaches that unless you perform correctly; unless you do always what you are supposed to do; unless you meet up to certain conditions and standards- you could not possibly be saved. And so since they rarely, if ever, meet those man-made requirements- then they reason that they must not be really saved. So, these people have no assurance at all.

And yet these people try- and they try real hard- but they are never good enough in their own mind to be worthy of being saved and so they feel as though God hates them and that they are not good enough to go to Heaven.

And like the first group- the *reason* that these people have no assurance is because they do not have a Biblical understanding of Salvation in the first place. And like the first group- they too believe that Salvation is all about what *they* do for themselves and not what Christ has done for them. But *unlike* the first group- the way that these people respond to the unarguable fact that they still sin- is by sinking into total despair.

Now let me say to you that both of these groups are wrong. Neither one is more noble or closer to the Truth than the other. And both the modern day Pharisee and those who have no hope at all are *dishonoring* God by buying into a view of Salvation that God did not create.

And that is why, beloved, I spend so much time teaching what I am teaching. I have seen firsthand what an unbiblical understanding about Salvation does to people. I have personally experienced the pain; and the needless suffering that those who have no hope have when they do not understand Salvation correctly.

And I have also personally witnessed the flippant attitude about sin because people become self- righteous because they don't understand Salvation any better than the other group.

So I understand that man- made Doctrine is real bad and it is real destructive- and I want no part of doctrine that comes from the mind and heart and mouth of other human beings. So with all due respect to what many think about themselves- your opinion and my opinion about eternal matters is about as useless as a piece of cotton in a snow storm. What we think or what we believe about eternal issues is no more useful than a screen door on a submarine.

The only thing that matters about eternity is what God has said- and if what God has said *confirms* what I already believe- then praise God- may I be faithful to continue to believe that. But if what God has said in His Word *condemns* what I believe- then may God be merciful to grant to me the courage to throw out my false belief and may God be merciful to me so that I may accept what God says is true.

And we also have to understand that how long we have believed something is not this issue either. Whether or not what we believe is popular is not the issue. And whether or not momma taught us this or that our church believes this or some bestselling author writes about this in his latest book- is not the issue.

If God disagrees with what we believe- then we are wrong and God is right. And as believers- we are commanded in Scripture that when we find out that we are wrong- then we are to repent and change- regardless of the consequences.

For anybody to knowingly hold on to faulty and unbiblical beliefs simply because it makes them feel good or because they have believed it for a long time- even though Scripture clearly condemns it- is the height of pride and arrogance. Salvation is God's creation. Salvation came from God- not man. Salvation is taught in Scripture by God and what it is and what it is not- matters.

And the development and formulation of what we believe and what we reject about God and Jesus and Salvation and Heaven and Hell and Righteousness is called Doctrine. So if that is true- then everybody on earth *already has* a doctrine because everybody already believes or disbelieves certain things about these issues. So the kicker is not that *some* people have doctrine and others don't- but that some, most, or all of what we believe did not come from Scripture. You see, most of our beliefs are like a quilt- we are a patch work of various beliefs- some good and some bad- including New age philosophy; manmade theology; pagan ideas; what we heard in Church; mingled with songs we have heard; movies we have watched; books we have read; conversations we have had- all mixed together with our own common sense. And that is how most people develop what they believe.

But the reason that God gave us the Scriptures, dear friends, is so we would not do that. It is God's Will that we know Him and Love Him so that we may worship and enjoy Him in a manner that He is entitled to be worshipped and enjoyed. And the one single way to know God rightly- is by a systematic; line upon line; precept upon precept study of the most unique Book in all the world- the Holy Bible.

And as we participate in this life- long process of reading and studying Scripture- we inevitably run into verses and passages that challenge our some of our closely held beliefs. And at that point- we

have a choice. We may either reject what God has said- or we may repent and embrace what God has said.

And how much energy this takes or what this may cost us or how many friends we will lose or gain by doing this or how much popularity we will gain or lose by doing this is of absolutely no concern. All that matters is that at the end of the day- we hear those wonderful words-

“Well done- good and faithful servant”

Now nobody in their right mind would ever allow the Scriptures to successfully challenge some of their most cherished beliefs unless and until they are first convinced that the Scriptures are true. Because if the Scriptures are not true- then we *shouldn't* allow them to alter anything we believe. If all that the Bible is- is a collection of human opinion; or if the Bible is nothing more than a religious masterpiece put together by brilliant philosophers; or if the Bible is an outdated, chauvinistic tool to keep poor and ignorant people oppressed by wealthy and smart and privileged people- then you would be nuts to alter what you believe to fit the Scriptures.

But if the 66 Books of the Bible are the most unique Words in all the earth; If it is true that the Words that make up these Books are in fact inspired; if they are actually and literally God breathed; if they are inerrant—in that they *do not* contain any errors and if they are infallible- in that they *cannot* contain any errors. If the Scriptures are authoritative- in that they are the final ruling of all matters concerning faith and practice; if these Words are in fact relevant to those who live in the 21st century; and if these Words are eternal- in that they have always been true and they always will be true- if all of that is true about the Bible- then you would be a nut to keep what you believe if what you believe is at odds with what this Book says.

So as far as I am concerned- if you are not convinced that the Scriptures are inspired and inerrant; and infallible; and authoritative; and relevant; and eternal- then you should start by reading and examining history and archeology and literature and science which will absolutely prove beyond any doubt whatsoever that the Scriptures are what they claim to be. You see, believing in God takes faith- but believing that the Bible is true takes no faith at all- it has been proven

time and time and time again using all the disciplines of human life and is not in dispute to any honest person.

So if you are convinced that Scripture is true- then there is absolutely no way in this world that we could ever justify as to why we do not read it and study it and learn what it says. If the Bible is true- then there is no possible way for us to know God or to know Who Jesus is or to understand Salvation or to comprehend what should be and should not be going on in the Church unless we know what God has said about those issues.

So I encourage all of you- myself included- to get a systematic Bible reading plan. I have developed one that I would be happy to give you for free if you will write or call me. With this plan- in just three years- you will have read every single Old Testament Book three times and you will have read every single New Testament Book over 20 times.

Of course there are many other plans out there- if you don't want mine- but please get one and be faithful this year to follow it. Set aside dedicated time- early in the morning- before the phones start ringing; before you turn on the news; before you begin your day- to spend with God in serious, deep study of God's Word along with fervent and effectual Prayer- and I promise you it will change your life.

Literally millions of people are suffering either the scourge of self-righteousness or the horror of unending doubt- all because they do not know what God has said about Salvation. And there is no quick fix for this problem, beloved- and please don't seek after one. These kinds of serious eternal issues are not supposed to be handled quickly or easily. We need to spend time with God; we need to spend time with Gods' Word; we need to spend time being profoundly and deeply moved and changed and even disturbed by what God has said and so I urge you with all my heart to listen to what I am saying so that this year will be a year in which you will bring all glory and all honor and all praise to Jesus Christ.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.